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BULL-WORSHIP IN ISRAEL

BY LEROY WATERMAN  
Meadville Theological School

An interest in this somewhat gruesome subject for even the humblest reader of Scripture is challenged by the rather striking phenomenon which makes the founder of the exclusive, hereditary high-priesthood of the eternal and transcendent Jehovah at the same time the traditional originator of bull-worship in Israel; and there is no assertion in the account of the institution of these functions that his activity in either capacity disqualified him for the other.

The subject has received incidental treatment from various angles, and the general features of the Israelitish bull-cult are well known, but there is still room for a discussion of its extent and its bearing upon Israel's religious evolution, for in considering this matter we are not dealing with a sporadic relapse into foreign idolatry, but with the officially recognized worship of the national god Yahweh under the form of a bull.

Our traditional starting-point is the familiar story of Aaron and the golden calf.<sup>1</sup> The chapter is assigned to the JE source, but its secondary character has long been recognized. The definite analysis is difficult and uncertain. It is generally agreed, however, that the sections which clearly involve Aaron and the calf<sup>2</sup> belong entirely

<sup>1</sup> Exod., chap. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Vss. 1-6, 15-24.

to the Ephraimite document. The minutiae of the analysis need not detain us here. It is further agreed that the chapter was originally the continuance of *Exod.*, chap. 24. Aaron and Hur are left in charge of the people during Moses' absence on the sacred Mount; and as the time is prolonged the people become impatient and demand some outward symbol of deity. Aaron alone (Hur disappears from the narrative entirely at this point) complies with the popular demand, takes of their ornaments, fashions the golden calf, and establishes its worship. Moses descends from the Mount, discovers what has occurred, and in great wrath destroys the image and penalizes the people; and as the narrative now stands the penalty includes the slaughter of three thousand of the common people, while Aaron, the willing agent of the people's whims who suggests the means and provides the form of their idolatry, goes scot free with no definite word of rebuke.

The other textual item is *I Kings* 12:26-32, in which Jeroboam I sets up his golden calves in North Israel, and the compiler of the Books of Kings makes this act the arch sin of all in that hopelessly wicked kingdom.

These two passages cover our direct source material on the rise of this cult; nevertheless in them we have the constitution and declaration of independence of Baalism as a part of Yahweh-worship, for in both instances it is quite clear that no god but Yahweh is meant to be worshiped. It is, moreover, generally recognized that the two passages are closely related. The language of Jeroboam in presenting the images to the people,<sup>1</sup> "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt," is repeated almost verbatim in *Exod.* 32:4, "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt." Dependence seems certain. The question of priority, however, has able defenders on both sides, but it is pretty safe to say that if the decision is left to the use of language alone, there can be little doubt about it, for, as Kittel and others have pointed out, "Behold thy gods," etc., can have a normal usage only in Kings where there are two images. In Exodus with only one image there is no excuse for such language, i.e., it could not be expected to arise from such a situation.

<sup>1</sup> *I Kings* 12:28.

The actual origin of bull-worship, in general, presupposes the keeping of cattle which only comes with agriculture, but when this stage is reached the representation of deity under the figure of a bull becomes common in the early sagas of most peoples.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in the Arabian desert only sheep and goats can be kept, so that the presence of the bull at Mt. Sinai as a symbol of worship is in itself most unnatural.<sup>2</sup> We are induced, therefore, to look for the rise of the usage after the establishment of Israel in Canaan.

The position of Aaron in the older JE source, moreover, points to Exod., chap. 32, as a later tradition than the Jeroboam passage. Aaron the priest is entirely lacking in JE. Wellhausen long ago pointed out<sup>3</sup> that Aaron was originally entirely absent from J, and this has been accepted by other scholars.<sup>4</sup> As the text stands, Aaron's name occurs but few times in J (Exod. 4:14-16, 29, 30; 5:20; 8:8, 12, 25; 9:27; 10:3, 8, 16; 12:31; 19:24; 24:1, 9), but with one exception (4:29, 30) Aaron says nothing and does nothing except to accompany Moses, and even in this capacity he is frequently left stranded in the presence of Pharaoh after Moses has had his audience and left the royal presence (cf. 8:30; 10:6, 18). In other words, in the J narrative—and the same applies to E (cf. Exod. 5:1, 4)—Aaron fails to justify his presence with Moses, according to the function of speaker and interpreter assigned to him in Exod. 4:14-16.

Moreover, in E there is no place left for Aaron in a priestly capacity, since this function is performed exclusively by Moses with the assistance of Joshua in the tabernacle without the camp.<sup>5</sup>

But in another capacity as one of the sheikhs of Israel, Aaron does appear to play a genuine rôle in E, (1) in helping hold up Moses' hands,<sup>6</sup> (2) at the sacrificial meal in honor of Jethro,<sup>7</sup> (3) when Moses ascends the Mount,<sup>8</sup> once also in J, when Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu are classed among the "nobles";<sup>9</sup> but in only two of these instances<sup>10</sup> does the evidence unequivocally favor the presence of Aaron as original, even in JE.

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 295-311.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. P. Smith, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 84 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Prolegomena*, §§ 142 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. McNelle's *Commentary on Exodus* (4:29).

<sup>5</sup> Exod. 33:7-11.

<sup>6</sup> Exod. 24:14 and chap. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Exod. 17:10-12.

<sup>8</sup> Exod. 24:11; cf. 24:1, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Exod. 18:12.

<sup>10</sup> Exod. 17:12; 24:14.

In the other cases where Aaron alone (or with his two sons) is mentioned, while the rest of the elders are unnamed, there is a strong presumption that the appearance of Aaron's name is due to a later accretion. Reference to Aaron's death in E is to be reckoned with,<sup>1</sup> but the item in regard to Eleazar<sup>2</sup> shows that it is an insertion later than the Deuteronomy of 621 B.C., and it should be brought into connection with Josh. 24:33. These together presuppose the development of a local Ephraimite priesthood which traced its origin back to the sheikh Aaron, and it lends support to the argument that the Aaronic priesthood of the P document had its origin in North Israel. We may formulate the order of events thus: Jeroboam's introduction of the golden bulls at the Royal Sanctuary in Bethel gave to that shrine a prestige hitherto unknown (the shrine at Dan was too remote to gain greatly by such an addition and it already had a Mosaic priesthood).<sup>3</sup> The priesthood of the Royal Sanctuary would not be slow to appropriate such an increment to its authority, and a most natural expression of this would be to make their earliest ancestor the originator of the cult image. This would account for the original form of Exod., chap. 32. There is no direct evidence of an Aaronite priesthood at Bethel; on the other hand, there is nothing to exclude it, and, as Professor Kennett has pointed out,<sup>4</sup> it is difficult to account for the origin of the priesthood of Aaron from any other sanctuary as readily as from Bethel. McNeile's attempt<sup>5</sup> to find Aaronic priesthoods elsewhere, notably at Shiloh, lacks proof.<sup>6</sup>

Exod., chap. 32, will therefore originally have been complimentary to Aaron.<sup>7</sup> In spite of Yahweh's displeasure, Moses' anger, and Aaron's manifest guilt, which is only enhanced by his pusillanimous excuse,<sup>8</sup> he is himself not even chided. The entire absence of direct condemnation under these circumstances can only point to the high esteem which he had formerly enjoyed and which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Driver on Deut. 10:6 in ICC.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 10:6b.

<sup>3</sup> Judg. 18:30.

<sup>4</sup> "The Origin of the Aaronite Priesthood," *Journal of Theological Studies*, VI, 161-86.

<sup>5</sup> *JTS*, VII, 7.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Smend, *Die Erzählung des Hexateuchs auf ihre Quellen untersucht*, pp. 352 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. lxix and 204.

<sup>8</sup> Exod. 32:24.

still prevailed in a wide circle. Compare the analogous condemnation of the kingship by Samuel.<sup>1</sup> The rebuke to bull-worship now expressed in Exod., chap. 32, may have come anywhere after the formulation of the Ephraimite Decalogue; and its final form about the time of the exile.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Kennett's contention<sup>3</sup> that the compiler of Kings had before him the account of Exod., chap. 32, as it now appears is an unnecessary assumption and McNeile's criticism is well founded.<sup>4</sup> The compiler of Kings does not assert that Jeroboam originated bull-worship; the most that he urges is that by setting up these two notable images of gold he caused the people greatly to err. If the thought of the actual origin of that form of worship did enter his mind, a counter-claim to priority in originating such images by any priesthood of the North would doubtless have impressed him as highly irrelevant.

Starting from these narratives, how extensive may we suppose the bull-cult to have been and what other evidence may be adduced of its extent? Beyond question we are dealing with a foreign element in Yahweh-worship, an element for which the desert cult has no place. It is certain, however, that Israel came into contact with bull-worship in Canaan, and therefore we need not look elsewhere for its origin in Israel. What is the evidence of bull-worship among the settled Semites and especially in Canaan in pre-Israelitish times? The change from the nomadic state to settled agriculture, particularly in the Semitic area, had important religious consequences. The cultivation of the soil carried with it the worship of the gods of fertility, the Baalim. Likewise dependence on the course of seed-time and harvest gave more and more prominence to the sun as conditioning the food supply, with the result that sun-worship gradually gained the lead over moon-worship. At the same time the importance hitherto attaching to sheep and goats among domestic animals was now extended to large cattle, resulting in the ready possibility of symbolizing both the Baalim and the heavenly deities by the might of the bull.

<sup>1</sup> I Sam. 12:19 ff. (late).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kent, *Beginnings of Hebrew History*, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> *JTS*, VII, 620 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 1.

In Babylonia the most striking and tangible use of the bull to represent the divine is undoubtedly found in the human-headed winged bulls stationed at the entrance of Assyrian palaces.<sup>1</sup> The use here of this form, however, to the exclusion of all others, gives to this representation a striking prominence. The same symbolism goes back to very early Babylonian times. It has been pointed out<sup>2</sup> that Ea of Eridu and his consort had each two divine bulls associated with them, two of them being called the god of the field of Eden and the god of the house of Eden respectively. Also an early geographical list calls the land of Dapara the "mountain of the bull-god."<sup>3</sup> Marduk, the chief god of Babylonia from the days of Hammurapi, still reveals his sun origin and his early association with the bull-symbol, first, in the writing of his name as the "young wild bull of day," and, secondly, as the ox that plows the "furrow" of the ecliptic across the celestial fields. The ecliptic itself was divided into twelve signs beginning originally with that of the bull, that is, with the sun-god at the vernal equinox, and thus it is that we have his identification with each of the different signs as he passed through them in succession, during his annual round.<sup>4</sup> In Assyria the bull and the chief god are also associated. We have a standard of Ashur involving a solar disk within which among other symbols are two bulls.<sup>5</sup> The west Semitic storm god Adad (Amarna), Addu (Syrian), Hadad, is closely identified with the same animal. On a north Syrian inscription (eighth century B.C.) Adad is represented with horns, and on the Esarhaddon stele he rides upon a bull,<sup>6</sup> as his sacred animal.<sup>7</sup>

The association of the "Thunderer" with the bellowing bull finds frequent expression. In the Amarna period the interchange of Baal and Addu in certain proper names shows that Addu could be called Baal. The confusion of Yahweh with the Baals and his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the very interesting explanation by Dr. King of the British Museum, following up the suggestions of Heuzey, that these figures represent a deification arising from a sound motif, due to the grinding of the heavy wooden palace doors in the stone door sockets (*Proceedings of The Society of Biblical Archaeology, December, 1912*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 290-93.

<sup>5</sup> Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Frank, *Bilder und Symbole*, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also Gressmann, *ibid.*, p. 57, ab. 91.

early representation as a god of storm and battle whose "voice" is the thunder was at least in these functions a close counterpart of Adad and capable therefore of like outward expression.<sup>1</sup>

In Phoenicia, Baal was represented by the bull, and, at Sidon, Astarte appeared with a cow's head.<sup>2</sup> The form and relation of Baal and Astarte in Phoenicia appear from the name Zeus Asterius, the bull of Europa whose epithet implies the male counterpart of Astarte, with whom Europa was identified at Sidon.<sup>3</sup> The early character of this rôle of Astarte is confirmed by the Phoenician horror of eating the flesh of the cow.<sup>4</sup> Early Astarte-worship east of the Jordan appears in Ashteroth-karnaim,<sup>5</sup> whether we translate *karnaim* "horns" or "peaks."<sup>6</sup> Her worship west of the Jordan is reflected in several passages<sup>7</sup> usually associated with Baal. I Kings 11:5, 33; II Kings 23:13 show the early prestige of the Sidonian Astarte in Israel, and it matters very little whether it was a cow-goddess or a bull-god on the high place at Jerusalem in the days of Solomon. Later traces of bull-worship in Syria-Palestine are found in the proper name Egelyo, "calf of Yahweh," from the Samarian Ostraka, the Palmyrene divine name Egelbol, "calf of Baal,"<sup>8</sup> and the bull-god at Baal-bek. Cf. also the bronze bull from Rihab and another in stone relief from Erruman, both east of the Jordan.<sup>9</sup> In the words of H. P. Smith,<sup>10</sup> "The evidence seems sufficient to justify the conclusion that the identification of Yahweh with the bull was the result of his fusion with Baal."

As far as that fusion in Israel itself was concerned, the conception of the Baalim as gods of agriculture finds classic expression in Hos. 2:5, "For she said I will go after my lovers that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink," and this statement when taken with Hos. 2:16 (from which we learn that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ps. 18:8, 10, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Phil. Byb. tr. *Hist. Gr.*, III, 569.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. 14:5.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Deut. 1:4; Josh. 9:10; 21:27.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Judg. 2:13; 10:6; I Sam. 7:3 f.; 12:10; 31:10; I Kings 11:5.

<sup>8</sup> H. P. Smith *contra* Cook, *N.S.I.*, pp. 301 f.

<sup>9</sup> Gressmann, *op. cit.*, II, 76-77.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 85.



Israel freely identified Yahweh with Baal) shows how completely Baalism had been naturalized and incorporated in Yahweh-worship and therefore how naturally and inevitably the Israelites would worship Yahweh under the form of a bull wherever Baal happened to be so worshiped. It is to be noted that in both the golden-calf narratives, the circumstances naturally presuppose the well-established use of the bull-image of Yahweh. In Exodus the people themselves acclaim the image as the god which brought them up from Egypt and at once plans are made for a feast of Yahweh. In Kings the acceptance of the images is equally immediate, i.e., in both cases the people recognize an object so familiar that no explanation is required to have it immediately accepted. It is clear, therefore, that both accounts, while formally giving what might be taken as implied first instances of the practice, in reality presuppose the existence of the usage when these particular traditions arose.

We inquire then, first, are there any earlier traces of the bull-worship of Yahweh in our sources? In Judg. 6:25, particularly in the words **פִּרְ הַשּׁוּר . . . וּפִרְ הַשְּׁנִי שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים**, Moore<sup>1</sup> says that we have a "meaningless and grammatically impossible collocation of words," and he is also virtually obliged to class with the above **בְּמַעְרְכָה**, vs. 26, "in the orderly manner" (R.V.); but contextually we must include **עַל רֹאשׁ הַמִּצְדָּה הַזֶּה** ("upon the top of this stronghold" just preceding **בְּמַעְרְכָה** in vs. 26) as highly unsatisfactory if not meaningless, in its present context, for there has been no hint of any refuge or stronghold preceding, to which the demonstrative could apply. Contextually strange also is a part of vs. 31 beginning: **אִם אַתֶּם תּוֹשִׁיעוּן אֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִרִיב לוֹ יוֹמָת עַד הַבֹּקֶר**, "Will ye save him, he that will contend for him, let him be put to death by morning."

The corruption in vs. 25 must be deep-seated because all the forms there are grammatically sound, but sense is one of the things that they do not convey. Even their rendering in R.V., pointless as it is, is not a translation of the forms as they stand, for the very good reason that, as pointed, no translation is possible. But ignoring the Massoretic text and beginning with **וּפִרְ הַשְּׁנִי**, let us read **וּפִרְ הַשְּׁנִי שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים**, "even the bull of the peaks, viz., the seven peaks."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ICC, on Judges.

For שן in the sense of a sharp rock, peak, cf. I Sam. 14:4, 5 twice followed by הכלע, "crag," and once alone as here. But as we shall see it is not used alone here, that is, it is sufficiently defined to distinguish the kind of שן meant. For the plural הַשָּׁנִים without final ם, cf. *Ges. Gram.*, ¶ 87 f. For the appositional construction שבע שנים, see Driver, *Notes*, I Sam. 2:13, and *Tenses*, ¶ 188 (1). On the gender of שן when used metaphorically, cf. *BDB*, 1042a, and Driver's *Samuel* on I Sam. 2:13 and 14:5. It will be observed that this rendering makes no change in the original. Let us now turn back to פר השור. The construction is without parallel. If the intention had been to distinguish the kind of cattle, the regular form is בן בקר, but פר is always used of large cattle and השור is with few exceptions applied to a single head of cattle, so that the phrase is practically untranslatable and meaningless if it could be accomplished. השור is quite certainly wrong, therefore, and one who attempts its correction is hardly to be charged with meddling with the original. It is only a question of the correct reading, but if פר השן is "the bull of the peaks," פר השור, which is most naturally taken as a synonym of פר השני, is probably פר הצור, "the bull of the cliff." The change of צ to ש in the old Hebrew (W to W) is in itself inconsiderable; also the tendency to soften צ to ש, seen, e.g., in צהק=שהק, and the close relation of צרה, "to smelt," and שרה, "to burn," may have caused the change naturally, but, since ש originally stands for both ש and ש, the change once made, the tendency would at once arise to identify the word with the well-known השור. But the corruption may have more naturally arisen through a misreading of השני as "second," and when that was done, הצור being quite unintelligible, השור was suggested both by similarity of sound and by its close association with פר. Furthermore, when familiarity with the use of bull-images had ceased there was no clue by which to recover the original sense, for the meaning will now be that we have a bull-image set up on a steep cliff, it being on one of seven projecting summits. The altar was probably lower down on more level ground. Gideon is commanded to remove the image, tear down the altar of Baal and the Asherah beside it, and build an altar to Yahweh on the top of הַמִּצֵּד הַזֶּה (vs. 26), "this fastness" (R.V., "stronghold"), in usage a place difficult of access

and easily defended.<sup>1</sup> According to M.T. the phrase has no point of reference in the context, but by the suggested reading it refers naturally to the summit where the image had stood. This is confirmed by the following **בְּמַעֲרֵכָהּ** (vs. 26), which we may now, for the first time, translate literally and get a suitable meaning, viz., "in the row or alignment," that is to say, the alignment of the peaks, and its use here would be a natural one in defining more exactly the position of the new altar.

Gideon was then to offer up the bull-image on the altar of Yahweh using the Asherah for firewood. He does as instructed and in the morning his work is discovered. It is then, when the people demand his death as penalty for the sacrilege, that the words of his father, upon the above rendering, first gain a real meaning, viz., "Will you contend for Baal, will you save him"; for the two clauses are not synonymous. Contending for Baal is here to act as champion of the violated sanctity of the god's altar, but any need to save him is not in any way involved in the desecrating of his altar. To save his reputation is about the most it could mean, but this is just what their proposed act could not do. But if Baal's charred image lay up there on the altar, then the irony of Joash's question becomes overwhelming.

Joash's sudden conversion to his son's position is not easily accounted for by the M.T., for as the narrative stands we can only assume him to have been lukewarm in his Baalism from the outset, but even then it is not easy to see how the destruction of the altar should affect him so differently from the rest of the people. In any case we seem bound to assume that Joash's regard for Gideon was stronger than his religious conviction, a position that seriously vitiates the argument, upon which the significance of the story is made to depend. The same difficulty in a slightly different form confronts us in the next clause of vs. 31, "Whoever takes up his quarrel shall be put to death by morning" (Moore). Moore calls attention to the difficulty these words raise in connection with the following clause, "If he is a god let him contend for himself," and declares that both cannot be original, but, apart from the general thought-contrast, **עַד הַבֹּקֶר** in connection with **יִלָּחֵם** is an impossible

<sup>1</sup> Cf. BDB, 731b.

construction. **עַד** as a preposition always involves the idea of extent or duration, including its object, so that in connection with **יָוֵם** it could only signify (1) "let the culprit be killed at once so that he will surely be dead in the morning," a perfectly inane and trivial statement; or (2) "let him be killed continuously from a given time till the following morning and then desist." In neither case does **עַד** have any conceivable function, and in both cases **הַבֶּקֶר** is a superfluous light in the sky. It is surely a very strange way of saying that Joash will fight for his son, if attacked. The difficulties both of construction and of sense indicate some textual corruption and all signs point to **עַד הַבֶּקֶר** as the guilty parties. Certain it is that the change of a single letter here, reading, for **עַד הַבֶּקֶר**, **עַד הַשֶּׁקֶר**, gives an appropriate and forcible meaning, for then we obtain "whoever will contend for Baal, let him be put to death as a false witness" (cf. Deut. 19:16 ff.), as much as to say Baal is dead and there lies his carcass. No one can henceforth plead for Baal and avoid perjury; if he is a god let him plead for himself. The clause as thus rendered at once has an integral part in the narrative. It hangs together with and further interprets the bull-image and it makes Joash's conversion a rational matter. The confusion of **ש** with **ב** may have arisen through a slavish copyist who confused a **ש** with **ב** in the old Hebrew writing, where the resemblance is very close,<sup>1</sup> and when the change was made to the square character the difficulty of extracting a meaning from the combination **הַבִּיקֶר** would lead quite naturally to **הַבֶּקֶר** as the frequent confusion of **ב** and **בֵּ** by the LXX shows.

The whole incident as thus interpreted gives another instance of the Baal-bull-cult as a form of Yahweh-worship, for it is perfectly evident from the older Gideon source that he is a loyal Yahweh-worshiper, and is not in the least conscious of any defection from Yahweh on the part of the people, which might account for Israel's humiliation at the hands of Midian.<sup>2</sup>

Now this situation brings us to another consideration. The bull of the peaks was located at Ophrah<sup>3</sup> and, according to the narrative that follows, it was at Ophrah that Gideon himself set up a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Perles, *JQR*, 1912, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Judg. 6:11f

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Judg. 6:12, 13.

golden idol connected with the worship of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> If our restoration is genuine, we have the tradition of a bull-image of Yahweh at Ophrah going back to Gideon's time, and a later story is recorded showing how Gideon destroyed the image in order to take the sting out of the unpleasant name Jerubbaal. But Gideon did not actually destroy the image, as there was no ground for doing so in his day, but his name is also associated with the setting-up of an ephod-idol at the same place, and yet there is no indication of more than one object of worship connected with the place. The original meaning and form of the ephod, first associated with the name of Gideon, has long baffled any satisfactory solution. It is possible, however, that, in the narrative we have just been considering, we may find some light.

There is a strong presumption that Gideon's ephod involved some sort of image. The amount of gold used, 1,700 shekels, and the implication that the object was worshiped seem to exclude the idea of a garment. Moore is convinced that an image is imperatively required here. A natural meaning for the word may be gathered from Isa. 30:22 where אֶפְדֵּה is parallel with צִפֵּה / צָפִי, "to overlay." Moreover, both words are used of the metal plating of cult images. Starting with this meaning it is easy to see how the plating, being the most precious part, would come to designate the image itself (cf. the somewhat analogous modern term "ironclad"). But neither the form nor the material is thereby fixed, and ample leeway is left for the development of the meaning "priestly garment"<sup>2</sup> or mask<sup>3</sup> from the same primary usage.

We have seen from the narrative in Judges that there was a bull-image of Yahweh-Baal located at Ophrah which is most naturally explained as an Israelite inheritance from the Canaanites and therefore older than Gideon. It was in the name of the god of his native place that Gideon went forth to avenge the blood of his kinsman and returned a national hero. It was accordingly a most natural and normal impulse which moved him to dedicate the choicest of the spoil to the god at the local sanctuary in Ophrah. With the gold in hand various forms of its dedication to the deity might be made, but in the case of an out-of-door sanctuary having a bull-image and

<sup>1</sup> Judg. 6:26-27.<sup>2</sup> I Sam. 2:18.<sup>3</sup> I Sam. 2:28(?).

with the meaning for ephod suggested above, the possibilities are much more limited. A cult image was not needed and a purely votive object is difficult to conceive without an inclosed temple. Yet the context desiderates a prominent object of worship, while the ephod suggests an image of some kind overlaid with the gold. All the requirements of the situation will be met if Gideon be allowed to dedicate the gold to the shrine, in the most natural manner under the circumstances, viz., by beating it into thin plates and spreading them over the already existing cult image; in no other way could the significance of the victory be made to redound more to the glory of the god. The result was an "ephod" in the form of a bull, but it would have been an ephod just the same if the underlying image had been in any other form. The cult image would thus become the glorious symbol of victory over a foreign foe, and, with such a sanctuary in his possession, it is little wonder that Gideon laid the foundations of the first kingdom in Israel.

The result to be emphasized in this connection, however, is that, as a result of the foregoing interpretation, the earliest form of the ephod known to us is a plated cult image in the form of a bull representing Yahweh-Baal. Both the form and the material were non-essentials, and one might add the function as well, but, once made, the wide social, religious, and political significance of the result would have to be reckoned with in all the subsequent usage, and we should expect it to go very far toward stereotyping the idea of ephod, especially when it was made out of gold and associated with worship, for not only is this the first recorded ephod, but the whole situation favors our regarding it as the instance which originated the ephod and its usage in Israel. Let us inquire how this view conforms with the other instances where ephod appears. In the first place we shall exclude such references as I Sam. 2:18 and 22:18 as well as the late priestly ephod in Exodus, where the meaning "sacred garment" is assured. There remains to be considered first of all the ephod of Micah, Judg., chaps. 17, 18, carried off by the Danites from its original home in Micah's private sanctuary in Mt. Ephraim<sup>1</sup> and set up in the temple at Dan.<sup>2</sup> This instance requires special notice owing to the various interpretations of the text of Judg., chaps. 17, 18.

<sup>1</sup> 17:5.

<sup>2</sup> 18:18.

But first of all as a general consideration, we find that a bull-image of Yahweh was associated with Dan from very early times. Kennett<sup>1</sup> is certainly justified in drawing this inference from I Kings 12:29 and he doubts whether the image there was due to Jeroboam. Farrar<sup>2</sup> had also questioned this, though on other grounds. The doubt, which is a legitimate one (see below), lends color to the hypothesis that the original idol at Dan was a bull-image of Yahweh. Professor Bewer has given a searching criticism of the two-source theory of these chapters,<sup>3</sup> and incidentally he reduces the decidedly complex array of images, there enumerated, by making *מִסְכָּה* a descriptive epithet and by putting ephod and teraphim in another category as "oracular equipment." But does this treatment fully meet the requirements of the case, so far as the images are concerned? *מִסְכָּה* is more than a descriptive epithet. Either *פָּסֶל* or *מִסְכָּה* is entirely capable of standing by itself, and they never appear again in such juxtaposition as here in the description of a single image. In the second place, the narrative starts out with an image in Micah's shrine<sup>4</sup> and winds up with an idol set up in the sanctuary of Dan. It is legitimate to inquire what becomes of the other equipment in the transfer, for, even though ephod and teraphim be classed as oracular devices merely, they were evidently regarded as important and we should expect some mention of them in the sequel, but we are denied this in the narrative. Bewer is certainly correct in regarding *פָּסֶל* and *מִסְכָּה* as applying to a single image, but is it properly a hendiadys? If so, the instance lacks a parallel. *פָּסֶל* and *מִסְכָּה* are never unequivocally equated as identical objects. Both terms stand out with sufficient clearness to establish their general characteristics, and it is only a question whether these distinctions were later interchanged. *פָּסֶל*, using as its plural *פְּסִלִּים*, denotes a carved image of wood or stone. *פָּסֶל* is used of hewing stone<sup>5</sup> and wood.<sup>6</sup> The wooden *פָּסֶל* appears in Deut. 7:5, 25; 12:3; Isa. 40:20; 44:15-17; 45:20; II Kings 23:6. It was probably of stone in Isa. 21:9; Judg. 3:19, 26; Mic. 1:7; II Chron. 34:7. It was not been conclusively shown that a *פָּסֶל* was ever made of metal. The inference

<sup>1</sup> *JTS*, VI, 167.<sup>2</sup> *Expositor*, 1893.<sup>3</sup> *AJSL*, XXIX, 261 f.<sup>4</sup> Judg. 17:5.<sup>5</sup> I Kings 5:18.<sup>6</sup> Hab. 2:18.

in Mic. 1:7 because of the association of כַּתֵּחַ suits stone equally well, and in II Chron. 34:7 כַּתֵּחַ is further explained by דִּקְקָה, which applies to stone even better. The use of נָסַךְ with פָּסַל in Isa. 40:19 and 44:10 is not decisive. נָסַךְ may quite as well signify here, not "to pour," but, as in Ps. 2:6 and Prov. 8:23, "to set up, place," Ass. Nasâku.<sup>1</sup> The fact that such a *pesel* was made by a חֲרָשׁ, properly a fashioner of wood, stone, or metal, by means of tools, not by casting, favors the latter use of נָסַךְ. It would, moreover, seem to be somewhat hazardous to assume the equating of פָּסַל and מִסְכָּה on the basis of נָסַךְ as long as one of its legitimate meanings permits a clear distinction. These four special instances of נָסַךְ are all used in exalted poetical language of exilic and post-exilic times. There is no good reason here, therefore, to think the terms were confused or interchanged. The kind of an image involved in מִסְכָּה and the process of its construction are not settled by referring to the root נָסַךְ, "to pour." This in itself might suggest the pouring of molten metal into a mold, as for example when the Phoenicians made the various utensils for the temple.<sup>2</sup> But it is noticeable that נָסַךְ is not the word that is employed to describe that particular work, and also that the Hebrew has no word for a casting mold.<sup>3</sup> The molten images used in connection with the cult, wherever specified, are almost without exception of silver or gold.<sup>4</sup> Whether the Hebrews knew how to cast hollow images or not, we have no direct evidence, but to cast solid gold or silver objects of any size would have been practically prohibitive, owing to the scarcity of these precious metals. The word נָסַךְ and its noun derivatives might legitimately refer, not to the formation of the image, but to the process of preparing the metal for use, comparable to the treatment of scrap iron. In Exod. 32:4 some such process is presupposed<sup>5</sup> in order to render the people's ornaments adaptable to Aaron's חֲרָשׁ. The very use of such an instrument, moreover, as the sole means of fashioning the image seems to require

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Heb. נָסִיךְ, Ass. Nasîku, "prince."

<sup>2</sup> I Kings 7:46.

<sup>3</sup> The R.V. rendering of מַעֲבֵה in I Kings 7:46 as "clay ground" might hint at such a mold, but cf. Moore on Judg. 7:22 reading מַעֲבֵרֶת, "ford," instead; cf. BDB.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hos. 13:2; Judg. 17:3; Exod. 21:4; Isa. 30:22; of bronze, I Kings 18:4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. vs. 24.



some other process than casting. The same need of smelting is involved in the case of the golden earrings of the Midianites, out of which Gideon's ephod was made.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted also that there is no unequivocal case of the verb **נָסַךְ** used of casting any object of metal (on Isa. 40:19; 44:10 cf. above). The Hebrew word for that process is **צָק**.<sup>2</sup> **נָסַךְ** is, however, the regular Phoenician word for casting metal, and it was undoubtedly the Phoenicians who first widely introduced the products of this art to Israel in the days of Solomon.<sup>3</sup> It was accordingly natural enough that this word should find a place in the nomenclature of metallic images, but such usage does not define the process but merely asserts that metal, that had been molten for that purpose, was used in the making of such images. This distinction also finds support in the two uses of **מִסְכָּה**: (1) in several instances<sup>4</sup> **מִסְכָּה** indicates not the image itself but the kind of material out of which it was made and is properly rendered "molten metal." This usage shows itself to be the earlier and from it the material came to be used as a synonym for an image of that material. (2) Wherever the process of making is in any sense described the implication is that the **מִסְכָּה** is made by first fashioning an image out of wood or stone and then overlaying it with a plating of precious metal.<sup>5</sup> In Isa. 30:22 "the plating of thy molten images of gold" shows in what sense the images were of gold, viz., in the plating; and at the same time in what sense they could be called a molten image, for the expression is **מִסְכַּת זָהָב**, "molten image of thy gold." Isa. 40:19 starts out with a **פֶּסֶל** which is then overlaid with gold. A name for the completed image is not given, but as is evident from Isa. 30:22 f. it could properly be called a **מִסְכָּה**. This also suits the contrast with **פֶּסֶל**, "graven image," vs. 20, and these two are used as elsewhere to cover images in general.<sup>6</sup>

It remains to notice an apparent confusion of **פֶּסֶל** with **נָסַךְ**. In Jer. 10:14 (51:17) we read, "Every goldsmith is put to shame by a

<sup>1</sup> Judg. 8:26 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Exod. 25:12; 26:37; 36:36; 37:3, 13; 38:5, 27; I Kings 7:24, 30, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. I Kings, chap. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Exod. 22:8; 34:17; Lev. 9:14; Deut. 9:16; Neh. 9:18; II Kings 17:16; Isa. 42:17.

<sup>5</sup> Hab. 2:18-19.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Deut. 27:15; Nah. 1:14.

graven image, for his molten image<sup>1</sup> is falsehood."<sup>2</sup> פסל is not indicated here as the work of the goldsmith, but merely as the cause of his confusion, but that confusion comes only through his נסך, which is the proper work of a goldsmith. There is thus no necessity for confusing the work of the goldsmith or equating פסל and נסך, and there is no sufficient warrant for making this a test case merely on the basis of כִּי when the suffix is wanting from פסל. The dependence is perfectly straightforward if one image is the foundation of the other, that is to say, if the goldsmith makes his molten image by overlaying a graven image with gold. The writer states a paradox: a goldsmith is put to shame by the work of a wood-carver. How? Not because the work of the former is inferior, but because the more costly work of the goldsmith (נסך) is falsehood, much more then does the wooden core, with which he began, prove the folly of such image-making. Once also "graven images of silver" are mentioned,<sup>3</sup> but we are distinctly told that they consisted of פסילים overlaid with silver. The expression is as legitimate as it is to refer to the flesh of one's bones, and then, without explanation, to speak of the whole as one's body. The second half of the verse speaks of אֶפְדֵּית (fem. of אֶפְדָּה, for which it supplies the construct form) of gold of molten images as exactly parallel to צַפִּירֵי כֶסֶף of clause *a*. It is evident, therefore, from the parallelism of the verse and from the above examples that such an image might be called either an אֶפְדָּה or a מִסְכָּה, the one arising from the kind of material used and the other from the method of its application. When, therefore, Micah's mother says, "I had dedicated the silver unto Yahweh from my hand for my son to make a graven image a molten image" (the ו has been added through a misunderstanding), the whole context is perfectly straightforward. But she is saying more, in using such language, than that she proposed to make a molten image of the silver. מִסְכָּה was quite sufficient to convey that meaning, but Micah had already a graven image,<sup>4</sup> and it is that

<sup>1</sup> מִסְכָּה syn. of נִסְכָּה.

<sup>2</sup> R.V., "his graven image," is misleading, A.V. is better. There is a special reason for the omission of the suffix.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. 30:22.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 17:5a with 18:31a.

which Micah's mother proposes to make into a silver **מִסְכָּה**. The juxtaposition then spells metamorphosis rather than hendiadys. The meaning of Judg. 17:1-5 is then about as follows: Micah had a graven (wooden) image of Yahweh in a private shrine, and in his zeal for the adornment of the image he took eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother without her knowledge or consent, knowing that if he once got it spread over the sacred image it would be inviolable, but he did not trust his mother's religious devotion to give it for that purpose. The mother, however, had already secretly dedicated the silver to give it to her son for this very object. When the money was missed, therefore, she pronounced a curse, not because she suspected Micah, but because she feared the purpose she had in view might be frustrated by someone else. The curse, however, compelled Micah to confess and restore the silver. This confession, far from bringing any rebuke from her, leads her to exclaim, "Blessed be my son of Yahweh," for she perceives with what intent he had taken the money, and she then reveals her secret plan and ends accordingly by saying (vss. 3 f.), "Now therefore I will restore it unto thee." This she does by proceeding to hire a goldsmith to carry out the task of preparing the image; and so it could be said (as in vs. 3) that while Micah had a shrine with a graven image, he had now made an **אֵפֹד**, a much more precious object which deserved a constant attendant. This **אֵפֹד**, under the circumstances, could be referred to without misunderstanding both as a **פָּסֵל** and as a **מִסְכָּה**. It had been merely a **פָּסֵל**, it had now become an ephod, a molten image. This interpretation involves no modification of these verses either in structure or in order save the dropping of the **ו** referred to above. Even the troublesome clause at the end of vs. 3 is quite as integral as the rest. As is evident, therefore, the three terms involve but a single image, for which either name under the circumstances might be employed, depending on the viewpoint or the quality emphasized, and in accord therewith but a single image appears at Dan, there spoken of as "that which Micah had made"<sup>1</sup> or Micah's **פָּסֵל**.<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing explanation of ephod not only conforms to the ephod of Gideon but reveals the process by which it was made. It

might be objected that this interpretation would make every gold or silver image an ephod. This would be true so far as the form is concerned, but the appropriateness of using the name would probably depend on the separate existence of the unadorned graven image as a sacred object before it was overlaid with precious metal, and the extension of the use of the name which a few historic examples might inspire.

The relation of this ephod to bull-worship evidently depends on the form of Micah's original graven image. The context distinctly implies that it was an image of Yahweh. Its close correspondence with the ephod of Gideon both in method of construction and in historical period and the fact that both were located in Mt. Ephraim suggest the same form, while the historical fact that even later, though under the impetus of the same forces, Yahweh was officially worshiped in Israel under the form of a bull does not warrant us in conjecturing any other form in this case.

The other references to ephod that concern us here are I Sam. 14:18 (LXX); 23:6, 9; 30:7. Moore says: "In all these passages the ephod may be an idol, but it must be admitted . . . none of them imperatively demand this interpretation." In view of the above explanation, we ask, rather, do any of these cases forbid this interpretation? I Sam. 21:9 presents no difficulty to such an explanation and this is the only remaining reference where the ephod appears in a sanctuary. In the other passages the ephod is always associated with taking the oracle of Yahweh. It was, moreover, something that could be borne in the hand. A small portable image is not excluded, but until the methods of taking the oracle are more fully known, these passages leave us to conjecture. I Sam. 21:9, however, in view of the two cases in Judges, favors a bull-image in the sanctuary at Nob in the days of David. Enough should have been said to show that bull-worship as a form of Baalism held a recognized place in the Yahweh religion from the days of the Judges onward.

Another sidelight on the practice may be found in the rise of the Levites. It is noticeable that the first Levite we meet after Israel enters Palestine is regarded as desirable as a priest and eventually becomes the first custodian of the sanctuary at Dan. Aaron when

first introduced in Exod. 4:14 is described as a Levite, and his first distinctively religious function in E is the institution of the calf-worship. In neither case is there any reference to a tribe of Levi; indeed Micah's Levite is distinctly declared to be of the family of Judah.<sup>1</sup> And every reference to the Levites in early historical times points to them, not as a tribe, but as a priestly gild,<sup>2</sup> whose association with the bull-cult is undeniable.

So far as the name Levi itself is concerned, it is noteworthy that no attempt was ever made to carry the priestly order back to a common ancestor, since Levi and Levite are exactly the same word in the Hebrew. This, together with the fact that they received no tribal inheritance, seems to show a lack of tribal consciousness, and to indicate that the word "Levi" was felt to embody their priestly function. The meaning of the name was lost, but a trace of it persists in their choice of Leah as their ancestral mother. The meaning of her name was also forgotten. It is now interpreted as "(wild) cow" through Arabic <sup>ك</sup>ن<sup>ة</sup> or simply "cow,"<sup>4</sup> but, as already implied, the genealogy here is an afterthought, since Leah is only the feminine counterpart of Levi from the same root (ל<sup>ה</sup>א<sup>ה</sup>).<sup>5</sup> I suggest, therefore, that Levi be taken as a gentilic form from ל<sup>ו</sup> on the basis of Assyrian l û √ל<sup>ה</sup>א<sup>ה</sup>, "bull,"<sup>6</sup> regarding l û of course as a contraction from li û, le û, le'û, "the strong one," II √ל<sup>ה</sup>א<sup>ה</sup>. A Levite would then be first of all a man of the L û (image), and then a member of a gild of that name. The name was acquired by the Levites after entering Canaan, as ministers of the bull-Baal sanctuaries, later taken over by the Israelites. The popularity of this form of worship rendered its exponents, the Levites, greatly in demand. This first appears in Judg., chap. 17, where, if correctly interpreted above, a bull-image was involved. This also enables us to explain why Aaron at his first appearance in Exod. 4:14 is characterized as the Levite, since at the same time he is called the brother of Moses, and

<sup>1</sup> Judg. 17:7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. P. Smith, *RI*, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Gray, *Proper Names*, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> Haupt, "Rachel and Leah," *ZATW*, 1909.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. √ל<sup>ה</sup>א<sup>ה</sup>, ל<sup>ה</sup>א<sup>ה</sup>, ל<sup>ה</sup>א<sup>ה</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Del., *HWB*, 364a.

the term Levite evidently, therefore, is not used to express a family relation but it distinctly implies that Aaron, at this point in the narrative, was officially something which Moses was not. The prestige which the Levites thus gained enabled them eventually to become the sole recognized priesthood in Israel by 621 B.C. They early appropriated Moses to their gild by making him a ben Levi.<sup>1</sup>

It remains to be explained how the Assyrian name for bull should come to be applied, in that case, to the ministers of Baal-bull shrines in Palestine. We can only deal with the general probability. However, the ease and extent of communication between Syria and Babylonia in the Amarna period leaves ample room for Babylonian artistic influence, and if a distinctively Babylonian sacred image with its Babylonian name could be introduced into Palestine in the tenth century B.C. and gain wide official recognition, as we shall attempt to show was the case, then a similar introduction in the twelfth century B.C. is not a whit more difficult or improbable.

A Babylonian type of image at a notable sanctuary might readily receive the Babylonian name, and copies of it in the same district would naturally bear the same name when the Israelites took over those shrines, by some such process as that indicated in Judg. 8:33—chap. 9. It is only necessary that these should have been of sufficient prestige in order to have given their nomenclature to all who ministered at that kind of a sanctuary, and eventually at all sanctuaries. The rise of the Levites would thus emphasize the early prestige of the bull-cult adopted by the Israelites in Canaan.

One other item bearing upon bull-worship as practiced in Judah consists in the bull as a motive in the adornment of Solomon's temple, involving also the cherubim and their relation to Jeroboam's calves. The twelve bronze bulls which supported the molten sea<sup>2</sup> served a structural use as well as a decorative motive, but a ceremonial purpose may also be present. The bulls upon the panels of the bases<sup>3</sup> seem to be purely decorative.

The cherubim, carved upon the walls<sup>4</sup> and upon the outer doors and overlaid with gold,<sup>5</sup> but particularly the two colossal cherubim

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Paton, "Israel's Conquest of Canaan," *JBL*, XXXII, 30.

<sup>2</sup> I Kings 7:25.

<sup>4</sup> I Kings 6:29.

<sup>3</sup> I Kings 7:29.

<sup>5</sup> I Kings 6:32.

of olive wood, fifteen feet high, overlaid with gold, which stood within the Holy of Holies, present a more complicated problem. The probability of Babylonian influence here is well assured by recent interpreters. The motive of these images at the entrance to the Most Holy Place has long been recognized as strikingly analogous to the winged bull colossi at the entrance to Assyrian palaces. But whatever the similarities here, it is evident that they could not be precisely the same; e.g., the Assyrian sculptures are still partly in relief, the cherubim are required to be entirely in the round; again in the outstretched wings of the cherubim we have a dissimilar element. It is practically certain, however, that they were composite figures, and, as we shall attempt to show, one element was the bull. Our chief source for these images is Ezekiel whose ideal descriptions nevertheless reflect his direct knowledge of the temple of Solomon. Ezekiel's cherubim are not only composite but compound and conglomerate. The chief ingredients are the cherubim of the inner temple, the oxen of the molten sea, the bronze laver bases with their four wheels, the high altar, and the throne of the king, but out of this highly involved *monstrum* certain general features emerge: (1) all the living creatures have wings; (2) the human countenance of the creatures is a prominent and constant feature of the cherubim wherever their faces appear;<sup>1</sup> (3) all their feet were the feet of the ox.<sup>2</sup> These constant features would point to the original cherubim of Solomon's temple. And the particular form of Solomon's cherubim will have been due to the Phoenician builders of the temple. Now the practice of fashioning such composite figures extends all through the ancient civilization of the Near East.<sup>3</sup> Variations in form and composition characterize different countries and periods. A common designation applied to them in modern times is γρύψ, γρυπές, Eng. "griffin," and a relation between this word and Heb. כַּיִּיב was early surmised. The plausibility of such a relation still has good support.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 1:5, 10; 40:19.

<sup>2</sup> Reading (Ezek. 1:2) ורגליהם רגלי הֶשֶׁר.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Prince-Ziegler in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertums-Wissenschaften*, pp. 1902 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Skinner, *Genesis* 3:24, and *Real-Enc.*, p. 1902.

The difficulty of deriving כרוב from γρύψ is not due to phonetic obstacles but to the lack of any plausible Indo-European derivation for γρύψ.<sup>1</sup> But if the Phoenicians, as seems probable, transmitted כרוב to the Hebrews, there is much to be said in favor of a similar transmission to the Greeks in the form of γρύψ.<sup>2</sup> The question of ultimate origin, however, still remains open, and the function of the cherubim favors Babylonia, yet the corresponding Assyrian Šêdu and Lamassu give us no clue, although their close association with Lû, "bull," never leaves us in any doubt as to their nature. But, as Delitzsch has pointed out,<sup>3</sup> when these bull-colossi are designated by combining the ideograms for Šêdu and Lamassu, 𐎶𐎵 𐎶𐎵𐎶𐎵𐎶𐎵 ALAD.LAMMA, we are still uncertain how they read the combination. Is there anything to indicate that a form corresponding to כרוב was thus used? (1) The attempt to establish the form kîrûbu rests on a misreading. (2) Assyrian karûbu, "mighty," "powerful," is a good form, and it corresponds fundamentally to כרוב.<sup>4</sup> The ideogram for šêdu, i.e., AN.KAL, signifies "mighty [god]" and karûbu might therefore have been legitimately used as a synonym for šêdu, or as one reading of AN.KAL, but we have no documentary evidence that such was the case. (3) The form kurûbu probably a synonym of karûbu appears with the determinative for bird (II R. 37, 17, g, h) as signifying "the mighty (bird)." Cf. kasûsu also meaning "powerful" and likewise used as a bird name (Del., *HWB*, 344 b and 352a). (4) In Esarhaddon's description of his restoration of the temple of Ašur (*Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*, No. 75, ll. 18 ff.) the names <sup>d</sup>lah-me <sup>d</sup>ku-ri-bi are used to designate the two figures of burnished metal set up, one on either side, at the entrance to that temple. (5) In this connection the mutilated passage . . . . (gu-ud) Kil = ku-ru[bu] (V.R. 29, 74, g, h) although incomplete and partly conjectural gains considerably in probability and the position of (gu-ud) = alpu, ox, coupled with kurûbu (bird) lends color to the meaning "winged bull" for כרוב. The combination <sup>d</sup>lah-me(et) <sup>d</sup>ku-ri-bi

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *BDB*, 500b, and *Real-Enc.*, p. 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Muss-Arnolt, *Semitic Words in Greek and Latin*, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *HWB*, 646 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ball, *Light from the East*, p. 31.



doubtless adds somewhat of complexity in regard to the exact identification of these divine watchers of the gate<sup>1</sup> yet it assures "kuribi" as one of them at the entrance of an Assyrian temple in the days of Esarhaddon; but from this combination we may go a step farther. When Nabu-na'id (555-539 B.C.) restored E-hul-hul, the temple of Sin in Harran, he placed in its eastern gateway two lah-mu, one on the right side and one on the left (V.R. 64, col. II, ll. 16-17). A similar use of kurî(û)bu<sup>2</sup> has not been verified, but it is evident that the way for it was already prepared and that ALAD.LAMMA might have been legitimately so treated. Either, therefore, this usage of kurûbu was also established in Babylonia and thence passed to the west or the Phoenicians themselves standardized it in a similar manner to Nabu-na'id's lah-mu.

It is in consonance with this idea that the γρῖψ conception always symbolizes superlative vital power as associated with the divine. It is, besides, a standing characteristic of these *compositae* that the two front feet determine the body and lower limbs of the creature (i.e., they correspond to the same animal), so that, when Ezekiel, in spite of his mixed figures, clearly implies that all the feet of his creatures were the feet of the ox, the conclusion on this analogy is scarcely to be avoided that the bodies and lower limbs were those of a bull. And, when Ezekiel gives prominence to the human face of the cherub with indications also that it was a standing feature (see above), the likeness to the human-headed, winged bulls of Assyria is too close to be accidental. Representations of Yahweh as sitting or riding upon the cherubim, literally, or figuratively as in the storm,<sup>3</sup> are most naturally explained as later developments starting from the images in Solomon's temple. These figures would represent the images of Yahweh-Baal to the people, the addition of wings and human features would doubtless have been no more startling than the latest fashions from Paris are today, and yet probably quite as much sought after. But there was one saving feature in the temple symbols. The ark placed beneath the outstretched wings also

<sup>1</sup> On the significance of lahmu in the early myths cf. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, Eng. ed., pp. 414, 418.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. šulûtu, šulîtu; mulîgu, mulûgu; purussu, purissu; šumittu, šumuttu.

<sup>3</sup> II Sam. 22:11; 4:4; 6:2.

represented Yahweh's special presence. It was possible, therefore, later, when images became objectionable for the cherubim to drop out of sight and still leave a symbol of Yahweh's presence in the ark.

The relation of the cherubim to Jeroboam's calves has this in common—Jeroboam made two images. It is said that one was put in Dan, but this does not harmonize well with the reason why the images were set up, viz., to keep the people away from Jerusalem. Moreover, we have pointed out reasons to indicate that the compiler has confused an older tradition about the image at Dan. Finally there is evidence that there were two calves at Bethel, not only in Hos. 10:5, where the feminine plural of calves has been suspected, but in I Kings 12:32, where we read, "So he did in Bethel to sacrifice to the calves that he had made." The absence of any intimation of the king's presence at Dan strongly favors two calves at Bethel. And if there were two there, it greatly strengthens the argument for an imitation of the cherubim. When, therefore, traces of this duality of images at Bethel still appear in spite of the redactor's different conception, even slight evidence gains greatly in weight and particularly is this so if Dan already had its "calf." Accordingly the implied reasons for setting up the images<sup>1</sup> logically becomes the historical and true one; but waiving that point as containing somewhat of psychological subtlety on Jeroboam's part, still the language used, "Ye have gone up long enough to Jerusalem" (R.V. margin), distinctly implies an imitation of the worship at Jerusalem, and, when he adds, "Behold thy elohim, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt," he is not to be taken as making a new identification, but rather as reflecting the identification which had already been made in Solomon's temple, that is to say, the cherubim had already been identified with Yahweh. Now this is exactly what we should expect, placed as they were in the Holy of Holies and being the only images located therein, and particularly should we anticipate this in that period, if these images were in general in the form of a bull. When, therefore, Jeroboam says, "Behold thy gods, O Israel," the impression is that both images are presented together to the worshipers. If they were set up in widely separated sanctuaries this effect would have been entirely absent, especially in a period

<sup>1</sup> I Kings 12:28.

when any shrine might have its representation of the national deity; and there would have been left no particular sense of imitation nor of accentuation of image-worship in general. But in that case it is difficult to account for two and only two "calves," since there were several famous sanctuaries in the north; but the compiler of Kings' whole scheme of history reflects a novelty and an advance in image-worship made by Jeroboam. This would find an adequate explanation in the wings and the human heads of the associated cherubim. True, these features are never mentioned, for we have only hostile reports of these images, but there is something to be said both for two images together at Bethel and for their human countenances. In Hos. 13:2 it is reported "they say of them, let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves," and the form of the reference is clearly to the custom at a given sanctuary.

Furthermore, in this identification of Yahweh with the two bull colossi as Israel's *elohim* who brought them up from Egypt we have a suggested explanation for the origin of the equation Yahweh = *elohim* (pl.), as of course the name "Yahweh-Elohim" itself, in Gen. 2 a reason as well for the preference of the Elohist for the name *Elohim* for Yahweh, and why he thus not only uses the plural for God but at times chooses a plural verb to go with it (cf. Gen. 20:13; 35:7; Josh. 24:19); for here was visible, tangible, and official evidence that Yahweh was the *Elohim* and it could not be escaped. It may be urged that in that case the Yahwist and Elohist should have changed places, as the original cherubim were in the south. But, as we have already seen, the cherubim in Jerusalem were never the sole representatives of Yahweh in the temple, but from the start shared that function with the older ark. Moreover, the original cherubim early lost their prestige, quite likely as the result of being stripped of their gold covering during Shishak's invasion,<sup>1</sup> while in the north these idols throughout the whole history of the kingdom enjoyed the greatest prestige and stood in and by themselves as the highest political and religious interpretation of Yahweh, officially considered, and were accepted as such without question, so far as we can learn, till the protests of Hosea.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I Kings 14:25 f.

Perhaps none of these various items, taken by themselves, may claim the dignity or worth of a demonstration, from the nature of the case; but taken together, in an assured atmosphere of Baal-worship, we are constrained to conclude that the bull-cult of Yahweh in Israel from the days of the Judges to the eighth-century prophets was widespread and deep-seated, and the most prominent interpreter of Yahweh during that period.